

# THE RAILYARD DISPATCH

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DANBURY RAIL MUSEUM  
SUMMER 2019

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Welcome to the summer edition of the The Railyard Dispatch. This is my first edition as the new editor. I hope everyone finds the articles and pictures interesting and enjoyable. The newsletter is designed to keep you informed about all the activities and people that make the DRM a vibrant and unique museum. I encourage anyone that has a story to tell about their experiences working on the railroad or riding the rails to submit notes, articles, pictures or any other information to the newsletter for publication. The Dispatch will be published quarterly. Items can be sent to the DRM newsletter email, [news4drm@gmail.com](mailto:news4drm@gmail.com) or dropped off at the front desk at the museum. Any suggestions on how to improve the newsletter or ideas for articles are always welcomed. I am looking forward to making the Railyard Dispatch a vital publication of the DRM.

## President's Message:

To start this message, I would like to welcome Tom Murray as our newsletter editor. Tom has been a member of the DRM since 2013. Tom and his wife Lin have helped out on events during the year, including as Santa and Mrs. Claus. We are going to publish the newsletter on a quarterly basis. For information in between issues, we will be in touch through emails. Please make sure we have your email address.

If you have been to the museum recently or followed us on Facebook, you will know about the Uncle Sam statue in our parking lot. The statue was once part of the Danbury Fair and was sold to an amusement park in Lake George, NY. With that park changing their venue, the City of Danbury saw an opportunity to bring it home. When plans fell through to display the statue so it could be seen from Interstate 84, the City decided to use part of our parking lot, land which they own.

Other big news is the arrival of some new equipment from Metro North and CDOT. First to arrive was a set of New Haven Line M-2s. When they units were first starting to be retired, we asked for a pair but were told none would be available because of concerns about PCBs and asbestos. But recently, Metro North and CDOT took a different view and donated a pair after draining the PCBs. The cars are in excellent shape and open to the public. Next to come was F-10 locomotive #413 along with the former New York Central baggage car that served as the tool car for the double-ended crane. This car was also rumored to be a car used by Franklin Roosevelt to transport his Pierce Arrow whenever he visited New York. This was an urban legend that continued to grow to the point of several TV networks filming stories on it.

A visit to the rail yard will show that progress is being made on the Mill Plain Station and Turntable Timber Replacement. The sides of the station are now being resurrected. We had to dismantle the station in order to move it. It's been a long process but we are happy to have the station and feel it will be a welcome addition to the Museum, once completed. The Turntable Project has proven to be very time consuming. Once the old timber was removed, remedial work need to be done to the

turntable itself. The timbers that we purchased did not have the necessary milling. A group of members have been putting in many hours using hand routers to make the needed notches, a long and messy job. The Turntable is one of our star attractions and everyone working on the project is doing their best to get this back in operation.

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, we again were the venue for the Steel and Wheels Car Show. This year was the most successful with more cars and more visitors than ever before. The DRM presents one of the trophies each year. This year, it was co-named the Ira Pollack Memorial Trophy in remembrance of our late, past president. It was awarded to a Ford Economat.

The DRM also played host to Rapido Trains first Open House for their dealers and distributors in the United States. They were very pleased with the turnout and the Museum. We heard many positive comments from the people in attendance. Part of the Open House was to announce new product offerings in HO and N scales which was a live feed on Facebook. Included in the new product announcements are rebuilt FL-9s and Comet coaches currently in use on the Danbury Branch. Both FL-9s in our collection will be issued as models.

Another HO scale manufacturer, Arrowhead Models has come out with Pennsylvania Railroad "Committee Design" hopper cars like the one we have in our collection. Ours is included in their release and we have a couple of models for sale in the Gift Shop.

## DRM FILM STUDIO

By Steve Gould

Actors, take your places! Quiet on the motion picture at the Danbury Railway of current students and alumni from the group of seventeen, were led by Producer Aloui.



set! Action! And so, began the filming of a Museum on December 12, 2018, by a group Film Department at New York University. The Aidan Petershack and Director Ranya Chen

Director Ranya, Producer Aidan and another film student visited the Museum prior to the shoot to check out passenger equipment in the Museum's collection to use for the majority of the shoot. They were shown RDC #32 and former Reading coach #1547. They indicated that they needed something more modern so, with the permission of owner Orion Newall-Vuillement, they were shown the interior of Orion's 1980 SPV-2000 #1001. One end of the car has Amtrak-style seating which fit the bill perfectly. As a result, an agreement was signed with Orion giving the Museum permission to use the car for the shoot; followed by an agreement with the film director and NYU to do filming at the Museum.

The NYU crew arrived shortly after the Museum opened for business and spent most of the day filming in Orion's car. A number of Museum volunteers working that day at the Museum were asked if they wanted to be "extras" in the film. Sue Teer, Dave Roberts, car owner Orion, and Steve Gould agreed to participate. Steve even had a speaking part and said a total of two words ("excuse me"). They were said during multiple takes of his scene with the final one (Steve, let's lose the hat!) being "uncovered".

The crew completed their visit with one final scene of actors leaving the station using the south door of the building. All and all, it was a good group to work with and who knows, perhaps an Oscar may be in the offing!

## WHERE ARE THEY TODAY? AT DRM, OF COURSE!

By Steve Gould

Ed Bower's ex-VIA FPA4 #6786 (also former Canadian National Railways of the same number) appeared on the cover of the July 1979 issue of Railfan and Railroad Magazine. Today, the unit is a display piece in the DRM railroad yard, having been repainted to its CN livery a few years ago, along with FPB4 #6867. The A and B units were built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1959. Both units are still owned by Ed.

The New Haven Railroad's 4 double bedroom/14 roomette sleeping car "Stratford Point", built in 1949 by Pullman Standard, served as a first-class car for many years on the NH. The car had a second life when it was purchased in 1969 by the Long Island Rail Road for their summer season parlor car service to the Hamptons, Montauk and Greenport. For a time, the car continued to sport its New Haven paint scheme and was one of seven similar "Point" series cars in this service (the others were "Manomet Point", "Race Point", "City Point", "Pond Point", "Goshen Point", and "Long Point".) All the cars were later repainted in the MTA paint scheme and renamed before they were retired in 1975-76. The "Stratford Point" was purchased by DRM member Geoff Knees and brought to the DRM yard in 1998. Several years ago, Geoff conveyed the car to the DRM outright and, today, it awaits external restoration.

New Haven Railroad FA1 #0428 was built by Alco in 1947 for freight service. It regularly made its way through Danbury and across the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge on freights destined for the huge Maybrook, NY classification yard. The unit became part of the Penn Central Railroad in 1969 but was retired

by the PC in 1974. As the "Stratford Point", the FA found a second life when it, too, was purchased by the Long Island Rail Road in 1974. At GE's North Bergen, NJ facility, the unit was converted to a "power car" or cab control car for use in diesel territory on the LIRR. The prime mover was de-rated to 600 horsepower; the traction motors were removed, and the generator was rewired all to supply "hotel power" (lights, AC, heat, etc.) to a train of converted MU cars. The unit received a number: #617. Where is the unit today? In the DRM rail yard, having arrived in 1999, saved from the scrapper's torch! Alas, it also awaits restoration. We certainly could use a project manager and team to give this unit a "third life" as an attractive static display piece.

Sperry Rail Service Flaw Detection Car #135 was originally built in 1928 as a self-propelled baggage combination car, sometimes called a "doodlebug", for the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. It served the SAL on branch lines in SC and GA before being acquired by Sperry for use as a flaw detector car. While at Sperry, one could expect to see this car anywhere in the USA. Prior to its retirement, it was spotted on the Norfolk Southern in Manassas, VA in 1985. Sperry retired the car in 2003 and donated the car to DRM for display. This is another classic piece that can use volunteer help. Are you interested?

We have over 60 pieces of equipment in the yard, all of which had prior lives before coming to DRM. Please research your photo inventory to come up with some more examples for future stories of "Where Are They Today?"

{Editor's note: On your next visit to the museum, bring this article and use it as a guide to find each piece of equipment described in Steve's article.}

**OUR GUESTS SPEAK AND KEEP US ON TRACK**  
**By Steve Gould**

I did a complete review of the Guest Book sign in sheets for 2018 to get an idea of what our guests think of us and our volunteers. For the most part, it is very favorable. There were many one- or two-word responses that expressed their view of DRM such as “excellent”, “well done”, etc. But many took time out to say more as you will see in the below quotes taken off the forms. Some people were not bashful about telling us where we need to improve and that’s a good thing. There were a few that complained the train ride was too short at one of our events. But the large majority of comments were complimentary. So here they are:

“We all loved it. Our 2-year-old especially was enthralled. Thank you!”

“Great exhibit of railcars. Particularly liked the mail car.”

“Loved it, enjoy bringing the kids to the holiday rides.”

“Loved it. Awesome tour guide.”

“Loved it. Perfect way to learn about the technology of yesteryear!”

“8 on a scale of 1 – 10.”

“Interesting and informative collection – thank you for keeping it going.”

“Very nice, wish more trains would be restored.”

“Fantastic! Great enthusiasm from Rob. Keep up the good work – history is fabulous.”

“Very nice museum. Friendly people.”

“Great experience. History. Educational”

“Great visit. Especially nice to talk with Pete. Everyone helpful and friendly.”

“Loved it. Thank you for having the train tables for the kids.”

“Excellent! Enjoyed the restored cars.”

“Owen was an amazing tour guide.”

“It was great talking to Pete McLachlan on the FL9.”

From a visitor from France: “Great exposition and great to get in the carriages. Thank you.”

“It was wonderful! Thank you to your staff for such wonderful hospitality.”

## THE STORY OF UNCLE SAM



VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM WILL NOW BE GREETED BY A STATUE OF UNCLE SAM. HE STANDS IN THE CORNER OF THE PARKING LOT AND IS A REMINDER OF WHEN DANBURY HOSTED A STATE FAIR. THESE ARE SOME FACTS ABOUT THE NEW ADDITION.

1. Uncle Sam was a fixture at the Great Danbury State Fair from 1971 - 1981. He stands 38 feet tall, weighs 4,500 pounds, and is claimed to be the world's tallest Uncle Sam.

2. The last owner and general manager of the Fair was John W. Leahy, founder of Leahy Fuels, our

next-door neighbor.

3. After the Fair closed in 1982, Uncle Sam was sold to the owner of the Magic Forest amusement park in Lake George, NY. When that park closed, the City of Danbury bought back Uncle Sam.

4. The restoration of Uncle Sam was funded by “corporate partners and service organizations.”

Uncle Sam is an important part of the City’s heritage as is the 1903 Danbury railroad station that serves as the entry point for our Museum. He is a welcomed addition and will help draw new visitors to the DRM.

## TEASURER HUNTING: THE VIC WESTMAN COLLECTION

### By Stan Madyda

For the last several months, a group of DRM members have been meeting on a regular basis to work on the large collection of railroad related material and artwork left to us by the late Vic Westman. While we are done with removing items from the house, there is still much sorting and cataloging to be completed. Alan Gruber, Marty Scatola, Tom and Lin Murray, Peter McLachlan and I were the regulars with help from Michael Madyda, Jeff Van Wagenen, Jose Alves and the late Marty Grossman. Vic first worked for the New Haven but after a couple of years worked with the New York Central, Penn Central, Conrail and retired from Metro North. It is interesting to note that among his papers was some mention of the fact that at first, he had trouble getting hired by the NYC and almost gave up. After several years on the Central, he mailed a letter to the Federal Prison Bureau asking how to become a guard, presumably for Danbury.

Last fall, the attorney handling Vic's estate contacted me to say they are ready to work with us on cleaning out the house. I paid an initial visit to see what we would be getting. I knew right away that we would be in need of additional storage space to house everything and secured a climate-controlled storage unit. Selling duplicate books from Vic's collection on Amazon has covered the rental cost of the unit.

Paintings and drawings that are just railroad related number close to 100. Vic also painted and drew portraits and landscapes which were beyond what was specified in his will pertaining to the DRM. Vic drew in notebooks, on slips of paper and anything else that provided a blank canvas. There was a ratty old Penn Central employee timetable which we had gotten many of over the years. But inside the front cover was a sketch of a steam engine. Just about everyone from the

railroad that was an acquaintance of Vic knew about the space he had in Grand Central Terminal that he used as a studio. At some point he lost that space but relocated to several other Manhattan locations, all close by to the Terminal.



One of many oils by Vic



Not just railroading

Books were another passion. While there are a fair number of duplicates, we have added many to our permanent collection. One regional railroad we had very little material on was the New York, Ontario and Western. The railroad had a special interest with Vic and we now have a large collection of books, newsletters, calendars and images of the railroad after its abandonment.

Photos and slides are also numerous for the New York Central, especially the Harlem Division, the New Haven, the Central New England as well as the railroads that served Northern New Jersey. A number of employee and public timetables have been added to the collection. Of particular note are timetables and railroad published travel brochures for the period 1900 – 1930, all in excellent condition.

Vic was a saver. There is an entire metal cabinet filled with train orders that likely from his runs as an engineer on the Harlem. There are seniority rosters, train assignments, bulletin notices, pay stubs, time sheets, union information and correspondence from the railroad. He also corresponded frequently with several authors and while we don't have copies of what he wrote, answers to his letters give us some clue.

We did find some artifacts on the property, but not as much as I would have thought. We recovered a whistle post which I learned came from the Virginia Road crossing on the Harlem, just north of the North White Plains Yard. We also have one of the early large, wooden diamond shaped crossing signs. I had a feeling that somewhere in all of Vic's stuff there would be a mention of where the sign came from. Sure enough, he had a photo of a crossing at Coleman's on the Upper Harlem with a note saying that is where the sign came from.

Vic, his sister Elizabeth and his mother had a wide range of interests as evidenced by the thousands of books and magazines left in the house. Non railroad material was given to the Danbury Historical Society and Museum. Vic loved his property that he and Elizabeth cared for with flower gardens and tree. The property was donated to the City of Danbury with the provision that it be kept open space, which the City accepted.

## SCOUTS ARRIVE AT THE DRM

On Saturday May 18, over 20 Scouts and adult leaders descended upon your museum with the purpose of earning the Railroading merit badge. The group were members of the Powahay and Scatacook Districts of the Connecticut Yankee Council, BSA. They had camped out at Hoyt Reservation in Redding and returned for another night after their visit.

The Scouts were greeted by our resident Railroading Merit Badge Counselor, Tom McCullough, ably assisted by DRM Secretary, Steve Gould. Steve and Tom presented the Scouts with a 15-minute video produced specifically for this badge and provided some overview information in the museum. Then out to the yard where they boarded the Rail Yard Local. The Scouts were constantly quizzed on the requirements of the merit badge, fed additional information, and encouraged to discuss the very varied topics. After a brief lunch, the boys were taken on a yard tour during which, once again, they were bombarded with questions to ensure they were proficient in the required material



This group of Scouts were very engaged in the whole process, asked many pertinent questions, and participated in some lively discussions. Steve and Tom agreed that they were well deserving of the Railroading Merit Badges they earned that day. Their leaders indicated that the day was very informative and worthwhile; they planned to encourage other Scout groups to schedule a visit.

**A GREAT FATHER'S DAY OR  
BIRTHDAY GIFT!!**

**HANDS ON THE THROTTLE PROGRAM  
DANBURY RAILWAY DAYS, AUGUST 3 & 4, 2019**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be the Engineer of vintage diesel locomotive? To feel the power of the engine at your fingertips? To blow the horn? To ring the bell?

Come to **DANBURY RAILWAY DAYS** on August 3 or 4, 2019. For \$75, which includes admission to the event for the day, you get your chance to have your "hand on the throttle". Instructions and supervision will be provided by a competent and qualified crew member.

There are five hourly slots (one customer per slot) on Saturday and four hourly slots (one customer per slot) on Sunday. Reservations are required. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this program. Call 203-778-8337 or stop by the Museum for reservations.

SDG, 5/11/19

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

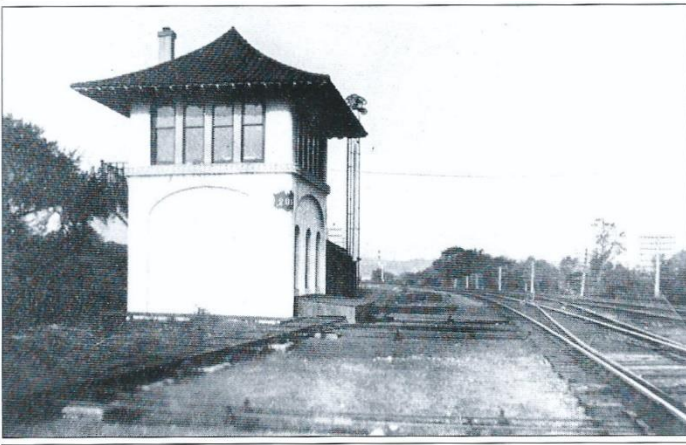
**WEDNESDAY JUNE 19 7 P.M.**



**GREET AND MEET THE AUTHOR**

**KENT PATTERSON WILL BE AT THE MUSEUM WITH HIS NEW BOOK ABOUT THE HARLEM LINE. THERE WILL BE A PRESENTATION AND THEN A BOOK SIGNING.**

**REFRESHMENTS AND AUTOGRAPHED COPIES OF KENT'S BOOK WILL BE FOR SALE.**



**DO YOU RECOGNIZE WHERE THESE PICTURES WERE TAKEN?**



**DANBURY RAILWAY MUSEUM  
SUMMER EVERNTS**

**SUNDAY JUNE 16**

**FATHER'S DAY**

(Fathers ride free with child's paid admission)

**SATURDAY JULY 13**

**OWNEY, THE RAILWAY POST OFFICE DOG DAY**

(Stories, history, and children's activities to honor Owney)

**SAT/SUN AUG 3 & 4**

**DANBURY RAILWAY DAYS**

(Special celebration with special activities. Free Admission for past and present railroad employees)

**MONDAY SEPT 2**

**LABOR DAY**

(OPEN 12-4)

**SATURDAY SEPT 7**

**FIRST RESPONDER'S DAY**

(Free admission & train rides for First Responders with id cards or in uniform & their families. Open to all members, signup required.)

**DRM WEDNESDAY EVENING PROGRAMS**

**THE PROGRAMS BEGIN AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE MAIN WAITING AREA OF THE DRM. THEY LAST ABOUT 1 HOUR. THE PROGRAMS RANGE FROM ORIGINAL PRESENTATIONS WITH SLIDES OR VIDEOS TO DVD/VHS PROFESSIONAL PRODUCED VIDEOS TAKEN FROM THE DRM'S EXTENSIVE MEDIA LIBRARY. ANYONE WISHING TO SHARING THEIR SLIDES, VIDEOS, KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST IN RAILROADING SHOULD SIGN UP AT THE FRONT DESK OR CALL 203-778-8337.**

**UPDATE: THE BIGGEST AND BEST EVER**

**THE STEEL AND WHEELS CAR SHOW WAS THE BIGGEST AND MOST WELL ATTENDED SINCE THEIR FIRST YEAR AT THE DRM. OVER 100 VEHICLES WERE ON DISPLAY FOR YOUNG AND OLD TO VIEW AND ASK QUESTIONS OF THE OWNERS. BELOW ARE SOME PICTURES OF THE EVENT WITH THE FIRST PICTURE THE WINNER OF BEST OF SHOW. THANKS FOR ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED AND FOR THE VOLUNTEERS WHO HELPED MAKE THE SHOW A SUCCESS.**

